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DISCONTINUATION OF MORSE CODE SERVICES
IN THE MF RADIOTELEGRAPHY BAND

1 The Sub-Committee on Radiocommunications, at its thirty-eighth session (18 to 22 January 1993), was informed by the United States' delegation that, as from 1 August 1993, all United States Coast Guard communication stations and cutters will discontinue watchkeeping on the distress frequency 500 kHz and will cease all morse code services in the MF radiotelegraphy band. More efficient telecommunication systems are now available to provide the mariners with options for initiating or relaying distress alerts and passing and receiving MSI.

2 These options include INMARSAT, radio telex (SITOR), MF/HF single sideband and VHF radiotelephone and satellite EPIRBs (for distress alerts and telecommunications), and INMARSAT SafetyNET, NAVTEX and HF NAVTEX (SITOR) (for MSI). NAVTEX broadcasts include the same notices to mariners, weather, search and rescue and fixed fishing gear location products that have been provided by the MF morse broadcasts. Distress and other calls to any United States Coast Guard communications station, can also be made on any of the following HF single sideband radiotelephone channels - 424 (4134 kHz), 601 (6,200 kHz), 816 (8,240 kHz) or 1,205 (12,245 kHz). Meteorological broadcasts are also made on these channels.

3 The United States was of the opinion that these options provide sufficient redundancy to ensure that adequate distress and safety communication capabilities are available.

4 Questions or comments regarding discontinuance of MF morse telegraphy services can be sent to any Coast Guard communications station or direct to the United States Coast Guard Headquarters:

Commandant (G-TIM)
United States Coast Guard
Washington, D.C. 20593
Telex: 892427 (COASTGUARDWSH)
Telefax: (202) 267-4106 or 267-4662

5 Member Governments are invited to note the above information and bring it to the attention of all those concerned.